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Moriya et al.

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(54) **INK JET PRINTING APPARATUS**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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Jul. 4, 2012 (JP) 2012-150683

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B41J 11/00 (2006.01)
B41J 11/06 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***B41J 11/0085*** (2013.01); ***B41J 3/4078*** (2013.01); ***B41J 11/06*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC B41J 3/4078; B41J 3/407; B41J 3/4073; B41J 11/0085; B41J 11/06; D06P 5/30; B41F 7/00
See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An ink jet printing apparatus includes a placement table on which recesses in which swelling portions of a printing target material fall are formed and the printing target material is placed, and an ink jet head that discharges ink onto a surface of the printing target material of a printing side placed on the placement table so as to execute desired printing. The swelling portions such as seams fall in the recesses on the printing target material so that the swelling portions and the ink jet head can be avoided from rubbing with each other.

8 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets

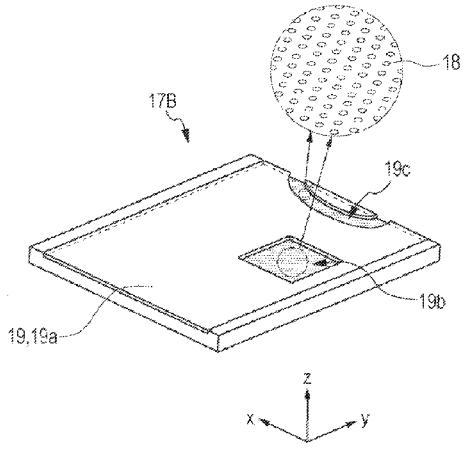


FIG. 1

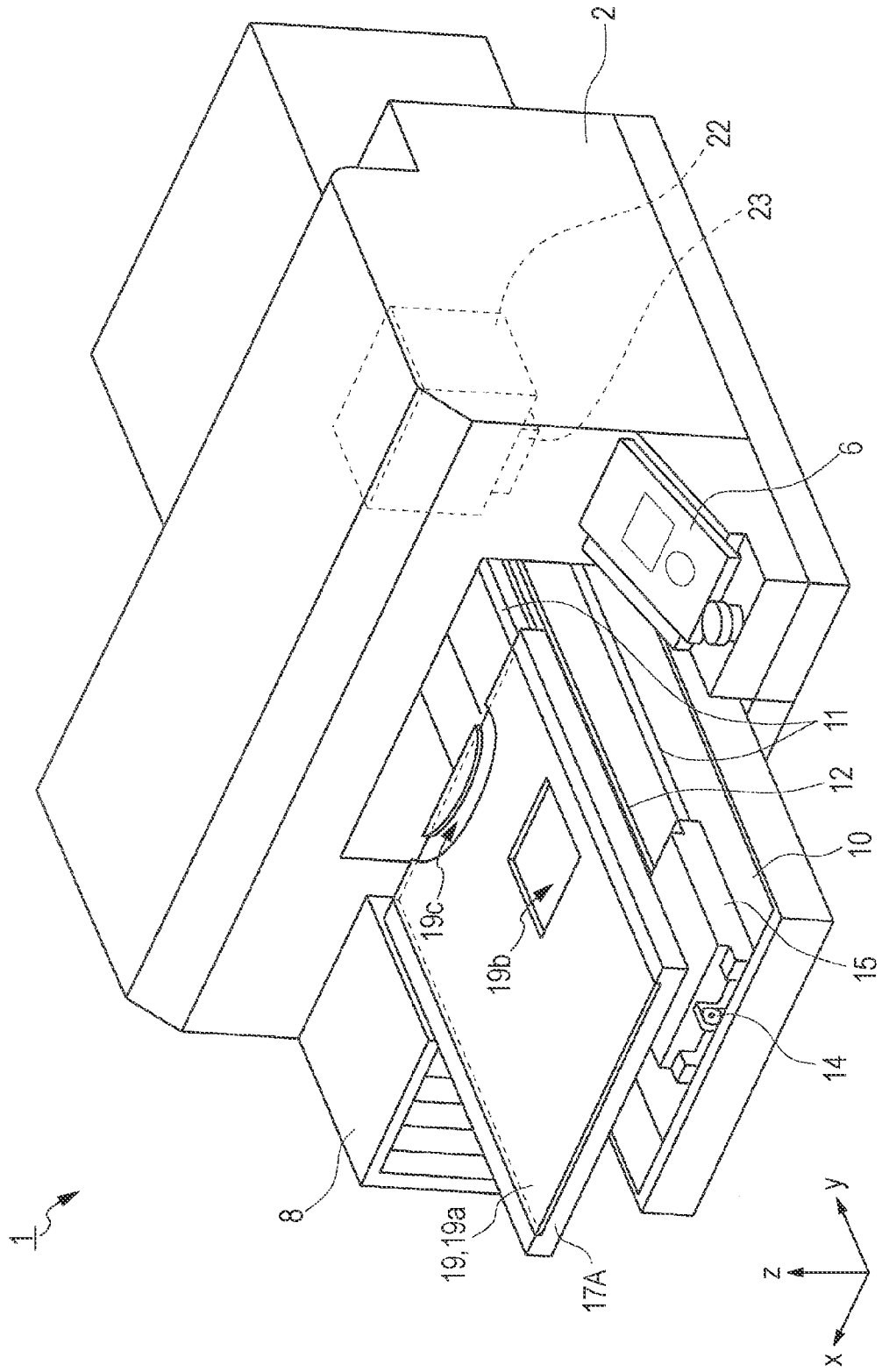


FIG. 2

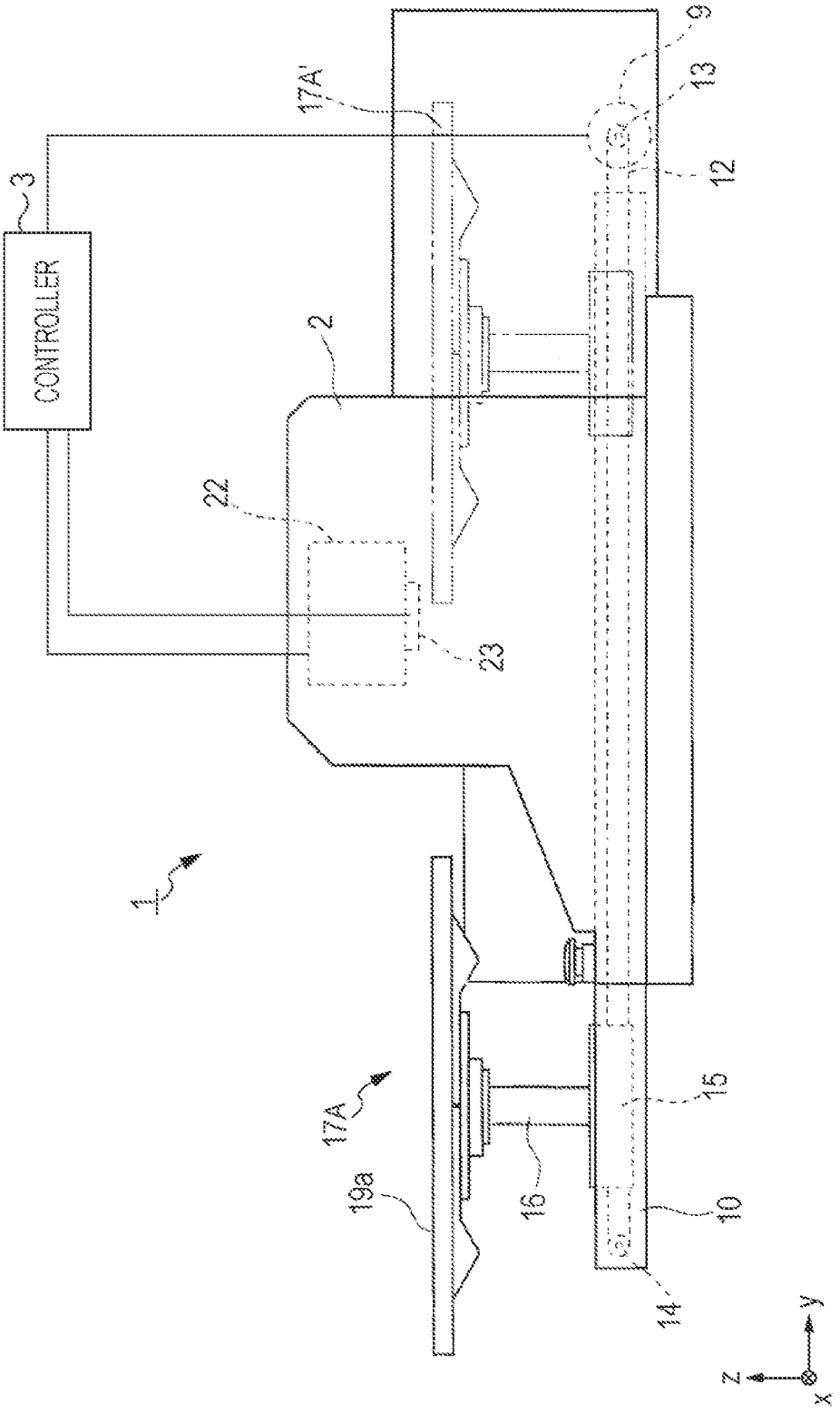


FIG. 3

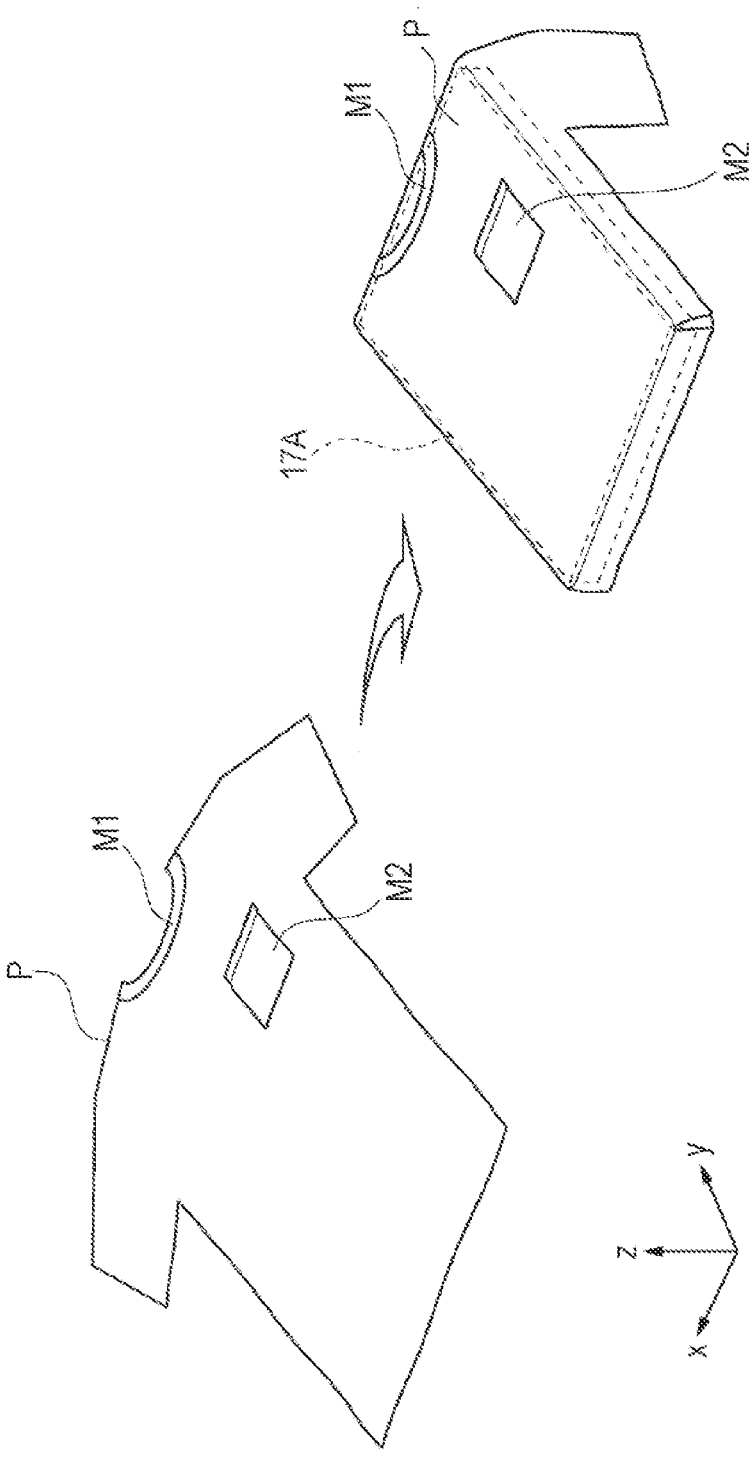


FIG. 4

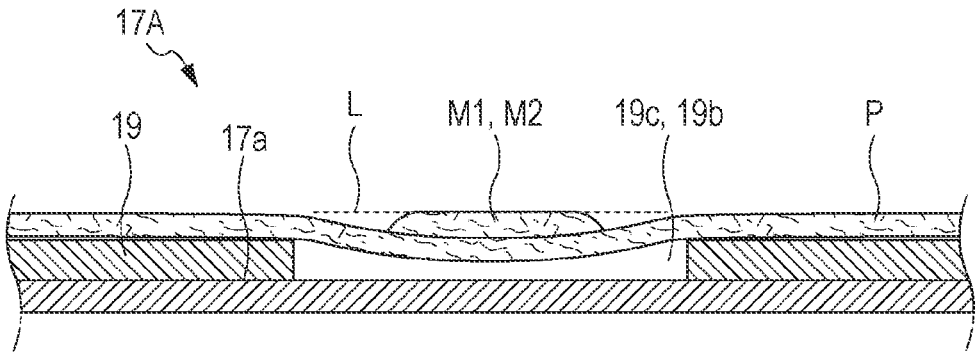


FIG. 5

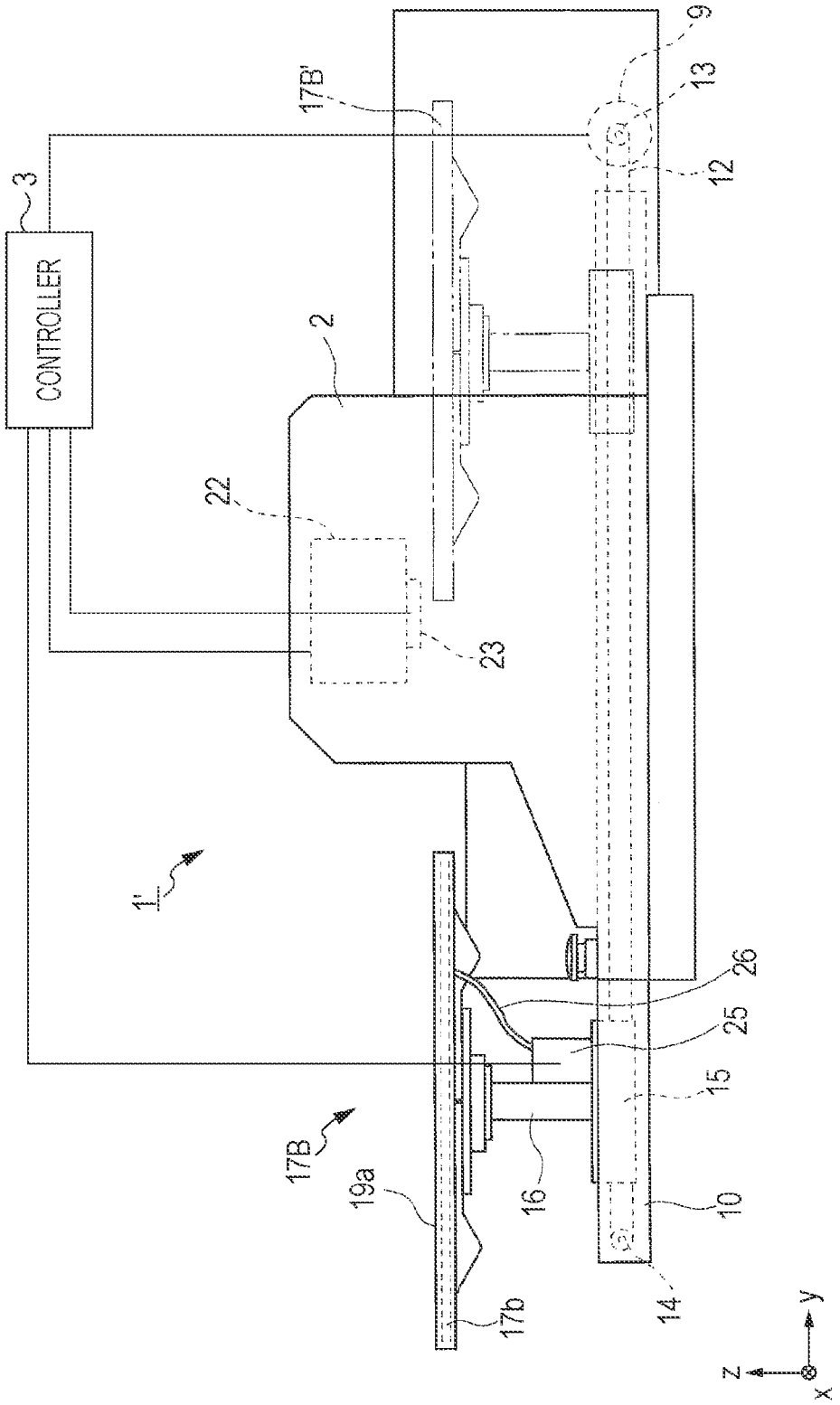


FIG. 6B

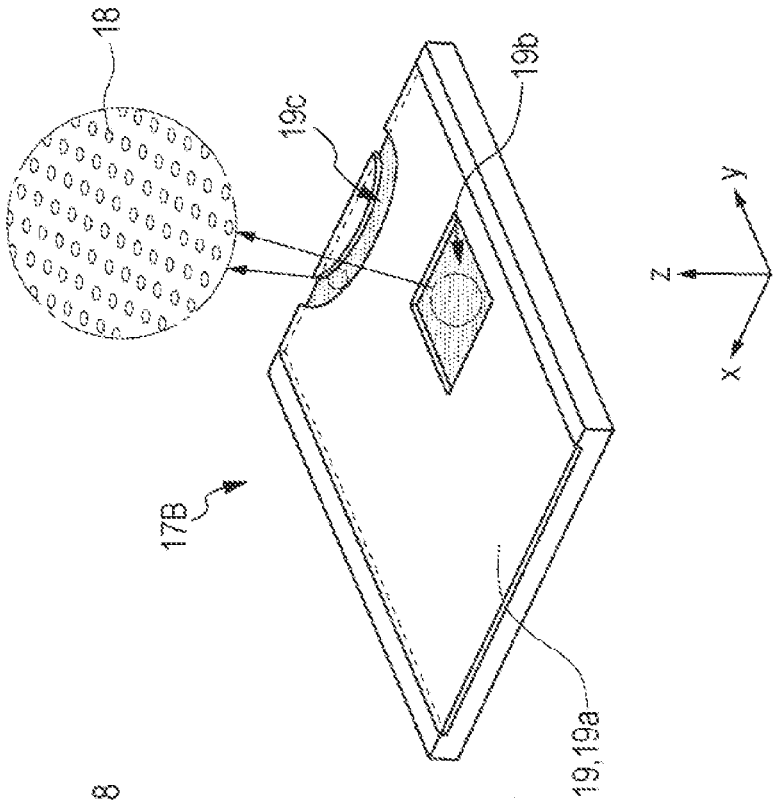


FIG. 6A

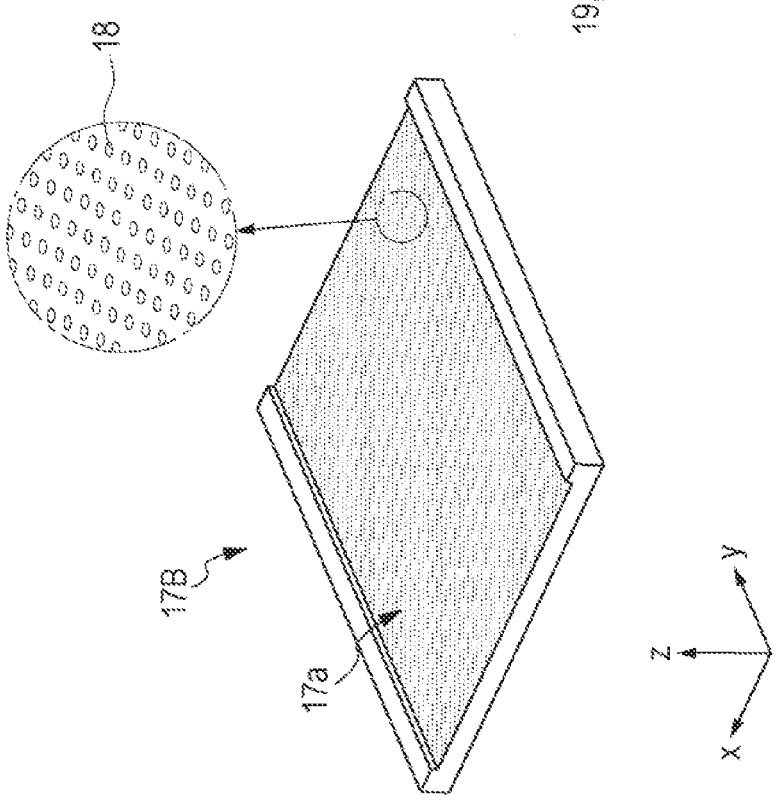


FIG. 7A

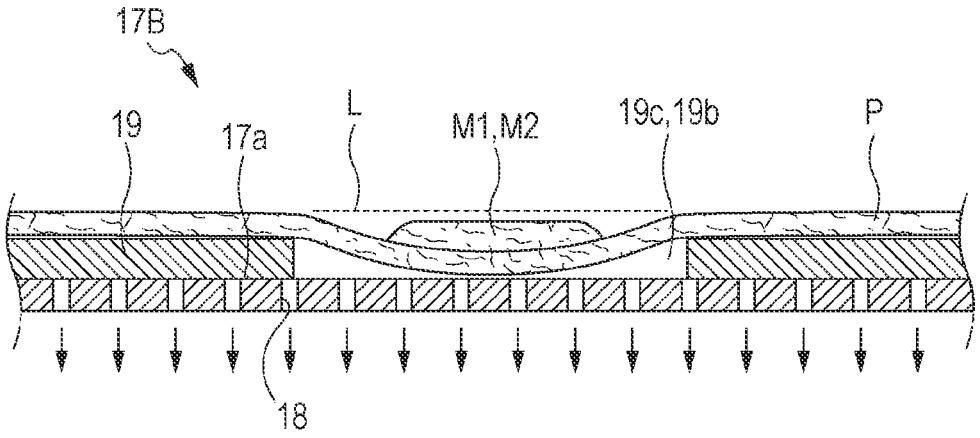


FIG. 7B

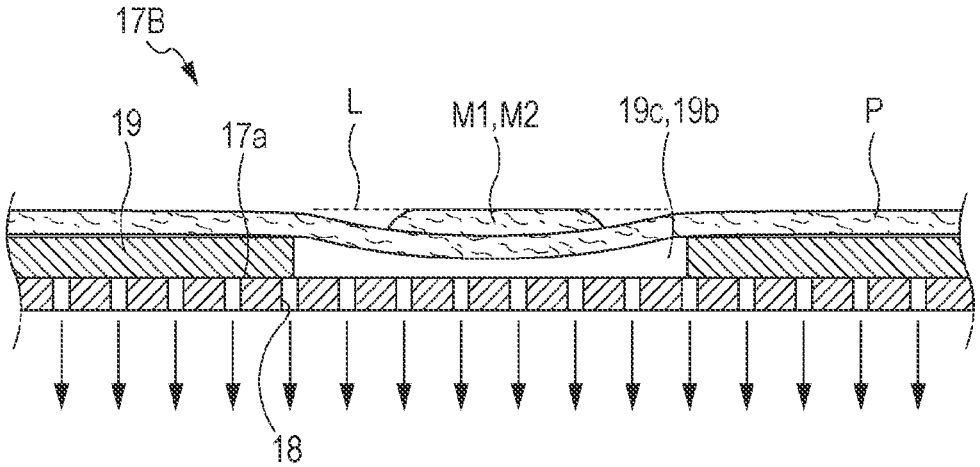


FIG. 8

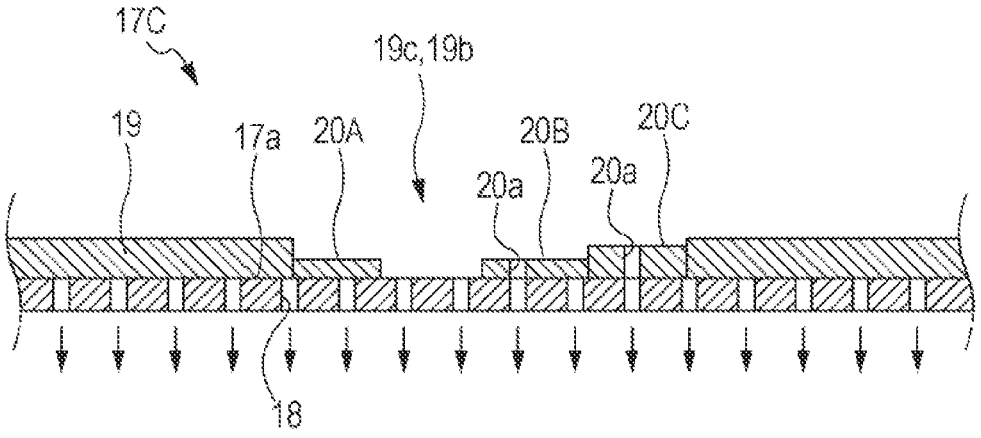


FIG. 9

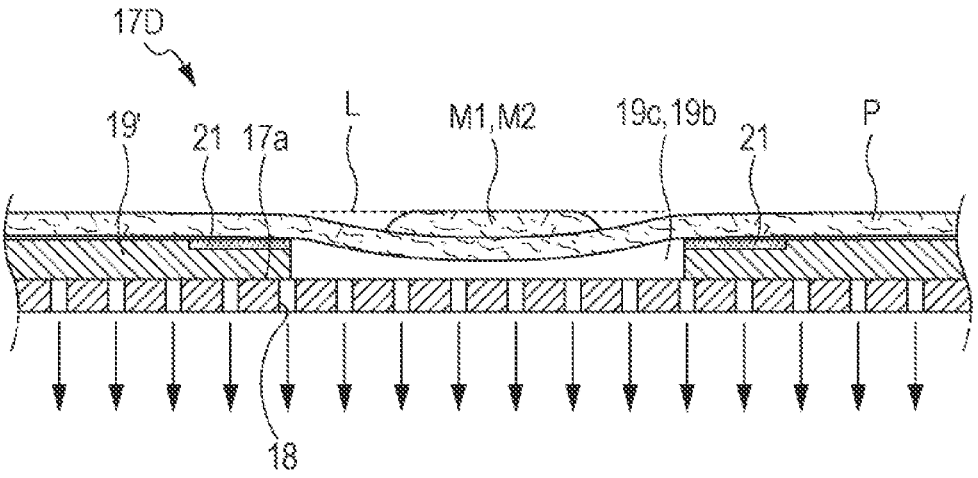


FIG. 10

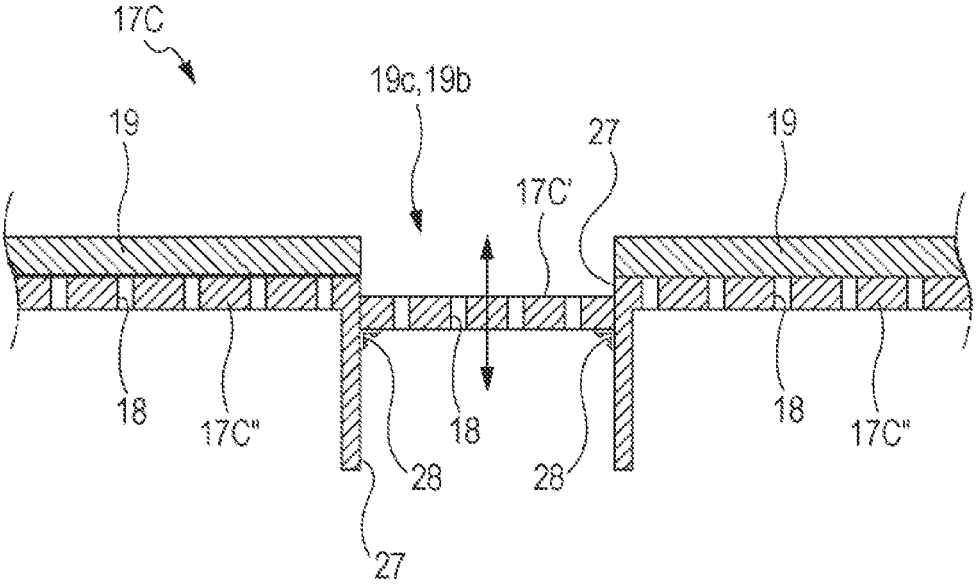


FIG. 11A

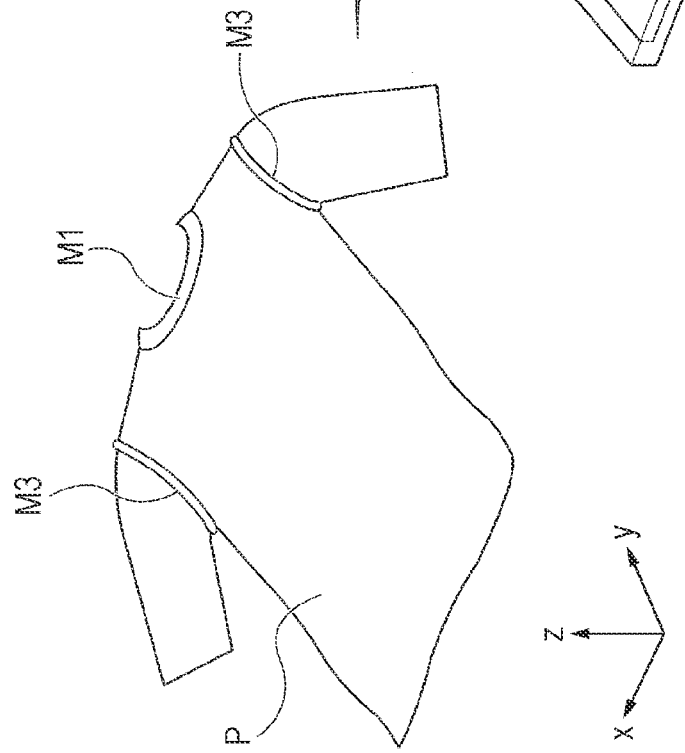


FIG. 11B

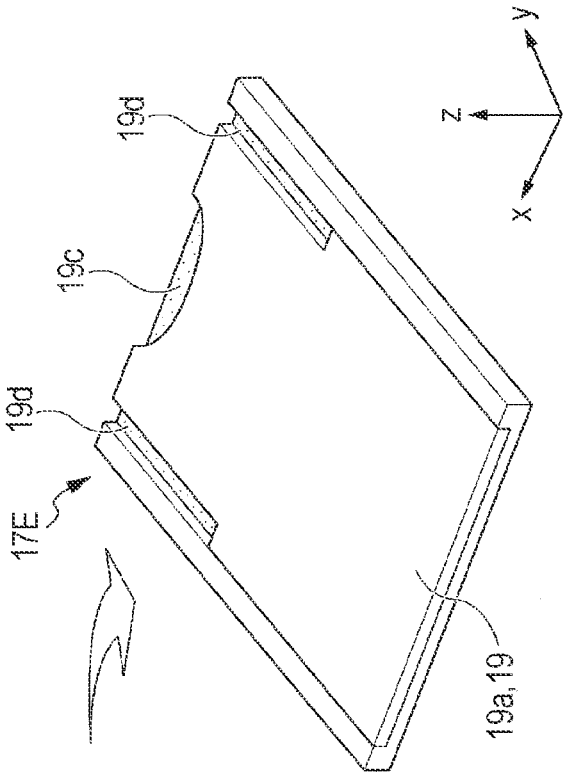


FIG. 12A

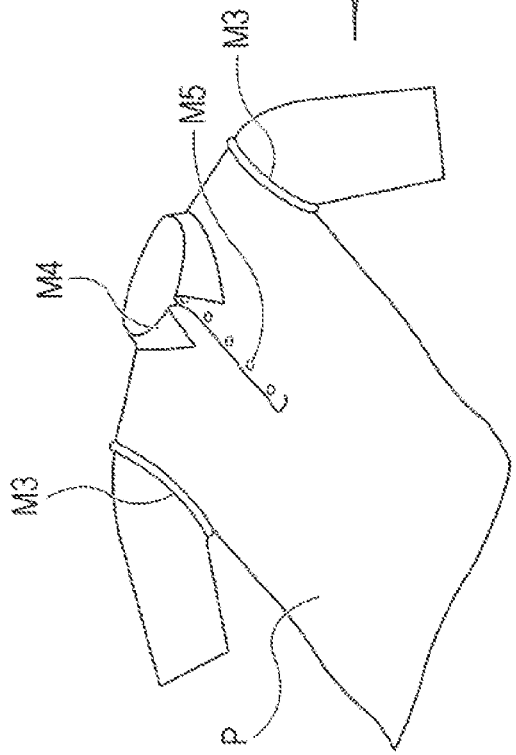
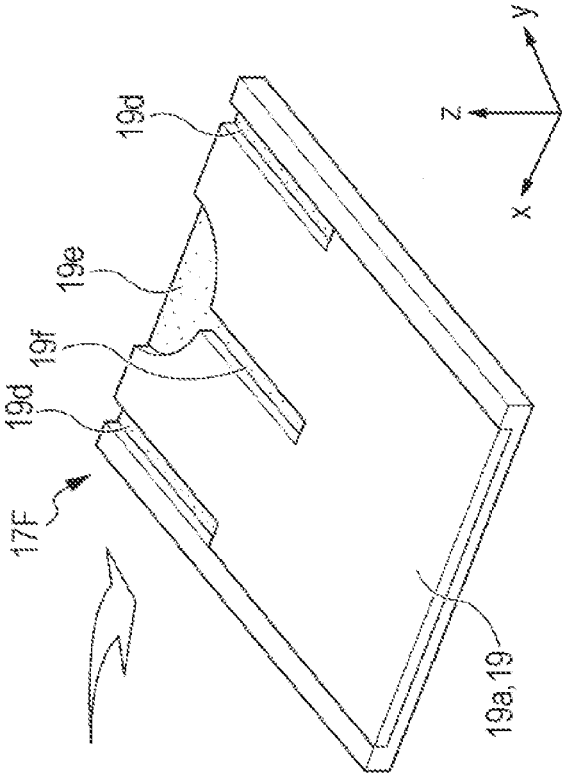


FIG. 12B



INK JET PRINTING APPARATUS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/481,720 filed Sep. 9, 2014, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,022,556, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/481,720 is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/601,974 filed Aug. 31, 2012, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,857,975, which is also incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/601,974 claims the benefit of Japanese Patent Application No. 2011-191915, filed Sep. 2, 2011 and Japanese Patent Application No. 2012-150683, filed Jul. 4, 2012, the contents of both of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

The present invention relates to an ink jet printing apparatus including a printing head which discharges ink onto a printing side of a surface of a printing target material to be transported so as to execute desired printing.

2. Related Art

In an apparel (clothing) manufacturer and a textile (fabric) manufacturer, existing "printing" in which a pattern and the like are printed on a surface of a fabric has been widely performed.

Further, as a printing apparatus which performs printing, an ink jet printing apparatus which makes ink which has been discharged from a printing head adhere directly onto a printing target material so as to execute printing has been developed.

As a technical problem specific to the ink jet printing apparatus of this type, there arises a problem due to swelling of a surface of a printing target material (for example, woven fabric) on a printing side. For example, swelling portions (raised portions) such as a stitched portion, a zipper, and a pocket are present on a cloth. Therefore, there is a risk that a head surface of an ink jet printing head makes contact with the swelling portions at the time of printing and a printing result is adversely affected. In contrast, if the ink jet printing head is made farther from the printing target material in order to solve the above-described problem, there arises a risk that image quality is lowered due to this distancing.

On the other hand, a technique for overcoming difficulties that a seam and a folding portion being present on a needlework generate differences in thickness when the needlework is placed on a flat surface is disclosed in JP-A-2001-96729. That is to say, a technique of sandwiching a mat board such as a foam sheet between a carrier (table on which the needlework is placed) and an image recording portion of the needlework and lifting the image recording portion so as to minimize the distance between the recording head and the image recording portion has been proposed.

With the technique as described in JP-A-2001-96729, contact between the seamed portion and the recording head can be avoided by lifting the image recording portion to be higher than the seamed portion with the mat board. However, since the image recording portion is lifted with the mat board, fluctuation in a thickness of the mat board leads to fluctuation in a distance between the recording head and the needlework as it is. Accordingly, a preferable recording result cannot be necessarily obtained in some cases.

SUMMARY

An advantage of some aspects of the invention is to provide an ink jet printing apparatus which can obtain a more appropriate printing result while avoiding contact between a swelling portion such as a seam and a printing head even if a printing target material having the swelling portion is used.

An ink jet printing apparatus according to a first aspect of the invention includes a placement table that includes a recess in which a swelling portion of a printing target material falls and on which the printing target material is placed, and a printing head that discharges ink onto a printing side of a surface of the printing target material placed on the placement table so as to execute desired printing.

With the aspect of the invention, in the ink jet printing apparatus, the placement table on which the printing target material is placed includes the recess in which the swelling portion of the printing target material falls. Accordingly, the swelling portion of the printing target material is made to fall in the recess so as to reduce a risk that the swelling portion and the printing head make contact with each other. Further, the printing target material is supported on the placement table on a region excluding the recess so as to ensure flatness of a surface of the printing target material at the printing side. That is to say, fluctuation in a distance between the surface at the printing side and the printing head can be prevented or a degree of the fluctuation in the distance therebetween can be reduced, thereby obtaining a preferable printing result.

According to a second aspect of the invention, it is preferable that a suction hole through which the printing target material is sucked be provided in the recess in the first aspect of the invention.

With the aspect of the invention, the swelling portion of the printing target material which has fallen in the recess is sucked through the suction hole so as to cause the swelling portion to fall in the recess more reliably. In particular, even when rigidity of the printing target material is high, the swelling portion can be made to fall in the recess more reliably.

According to a third aspect of the invention, it is preferable that strength of suction through the suction hole be capable of being adjusted in the second aspect of the invention.

With the aspect of the invention, the strength of the suction through the suction hole can be adjusted. Therefore, the degree of falling of the swelling portion in the recess can be adjusted. With this, the distance between the swelling portion and the printing head can be set more appropriately.

According to a fourth aspect of the invention, it is preferable that a degree of the suction through the suction hole be made relatively strong in a case where a printing target material having relatively high rigidity is used in comparison with a case where a printing target material having low rigidity is used, in accordance with rigidity of the printing target material, in the third aspect of the invention.

With the aspect of the invention, the degree of the suction through the suction hole is made relatively strong in the case where the printing target material having relatively high rigidity is used in comparison with the case where the printing target material having low rigidity is used, in accordance with the rigidity of the printing target material.

With this, even when the printing target material has high rigidity, the swelling portion can be made to fall in the recess reliably, thereby obtaining an appropriate printing result more reliably.

According to a fifth aspect of the invention, in the third or fourth aspect of the invention, it is preferable that a degree of the suction through the suction hole be made relatively weak when ink is discharged at least onto the swelling portion in comparison with cases other than this ink discharging.

With the aspect of the invention, the degree of the suction through the suction hole is made relatively weak when ink is discharged at least onto the swelling portion in comparison with cases other than the ink discharging. With this, when ink is discharged onto the swelling portion, an adverse influence on ink landing accuracy due to suction can be prevented, or the adverse influence can be reduced.

According to a sixth aspect of the invention, in the first to fifth aspects of the invention, it is preferable that a holding member that holds the printing target material be provided on a periphery of the recess.

With the aspect of the invention, the holding member that holds the printing target material is provided on the periphery of the recess. With this, after the swelling portion has been made to fall in the recess, a problem that the periphery of the recess on the printing target material is pulled and the swelling portion floats can be prevented from occurring, or the degree of the floating can be reduced.

According to a seventh aspect of the invention, it is preferable that a depth of the recess be capable of being adjusted in the first to sixth aspects of the invention.

With the aspect of the invention, the depth of the recess is capable of being adjusted. Therefore, the depth of the recess can be adjusted to an appropriate depth in accordance with the degree of the swelling. With this, the distance between the swelling portion and the printing head can be set more appropriately.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein like numbers reference like elements.

FIG. **1** is an external perspective view illustrating an ink jet printing apparatus according to the invention.

FIG. **2** is a side view illustrating the ink jet printing apparatus according to the invention.

FIG. **3** is a perspective view illustrating a printing target material (first embodiment) and a state of the printing target material placed on a placement table.

FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view illustrating the placement table (first embodiment) and the printing target material.

FIG. **5** is a side view illustrating an ink jet printing apparatus (second embodiment) according to the invention.

FIG. **6**A is a perspective view illustrating a state before a placement plate is placed on a placement table (second embodiment) and FIG. **6**B is a perspective view illustrating a state after the placement plate has been placed on the placement table (second embodiment).

FIGS. **7**A and **7**B are cross-sectional views illustrating the placement table (second embodiment) and a printing target material.

FIG. **8** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a placement table (third embodiment).

FIG. **9** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a placement table (fourth embodiment) and a printing target material.

FIG. **10** is a cross-sectional view illustrating another example of a configuration of the placement table (third embodiment).

FIG. **11**A is a perspective view illustrating a printing target material (fifth embodiment) and FIG. **11**B is a perspective view illustrating a placement table which corresponds to the printing target material (fifth embodiment).

FIG. **12**A is a perspective view illustrating a printing target material (sixth embodiment) and FIG. **12**B is a perspective view illustrating a placement table which corresponds to the printing target material (sixth embodiment).

DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

Hereinafter, an embodiment of the invention is described with reference to the drawings. The invention is not limited to embodiments, which will be described later, and various variations can be made within the range of the invention as described in the aspects of the invention. The embodiments of the invention are described below on an assumption that the various variations are also encompassed within the range of the invention.

FIG. **1** is an external perspective view illustrating an ink jet printing apparatus **1** according to an embodiment of the invention. FIG. **2** is a side view illustrating the ink jet printing apparatus **1**. FIG. **3** is a perspective view illustrating a printing target material P and a state of the printing target material P placed on a placement table **17**A. FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view illustrating the placement table **17**A according to the first embodiment and the printing target material P.

Further, FIG. **5** is a side view illustrating an ink jet printing apparatus **1'** according to a second embodiment. FIGS. **6**A and **6**B are perspective views illustrating a placement table **17**B according to the second embodiment. FIGS. **7**A and **7**B are cross-sectional views illustrating the placement table **17**B and the printing target material P. FIG. **8** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a placement table **17**C according to a third embodiment. FIG. **9** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a placement table **17**D according to a fourth embodiment.

FIG. **10** is a cross-sectional view illustrating another example of a configuration of the placement table **17**C according to the third embodiment. FIGS. **11**A and **11**B are perspective views illustrating a printing target material and a placement table **17**E which corresponds to the printing target material according to a fifth embodiment. FIGS. **12**A and **12**B are perspective views illustrating a printing target material and a placement table **17**F which corresponds to the printing target material according to a sixth embodiment.

It is to be noted that in the drawings, an x-y-z coordinate system indicates directions for the convenience of description. A z direction indicates a vertical (gravitational force) direction, a y direction indicates a transportation direction of the printing target material P (placement table movement direction), and an x direction indicates a direction perpendicular to the y direction and the z direction.

As illustrated in FIG. **1** and FIG. **2**, the ink jet printing apparatus **1** includes a guide table **10** on a bottom portion of an apparatus main body **2** and is configured such that the placement table **17**A is moved on the guide table **10**. To be more specific, guide shafts **11** which are parallel with the y direction are arranged on the guide table **10**. A base **15** is guided in the y direction by the guide shafts **11**.

Further, an endless belt **12** is wound between a driving pulley **13** and a driven pulley **14** along the y direction. The

base **15** is fixed to a part of the endless belt **12**. The driving pulley **13** is driven rotationally by a tray driving motor **9** so as to rotate the endless belt **12**. With this, the base **15** is moved in the y direction.

A shaft **16** is provided on the base **15** in a standing manner and the placement table **17**A is attached onto the shaft **16**. An upper surface of the placement table **17**A corresponds to a placement surface **19***a* on which the printing target material P is placed. The printing target material P is placed on the placement surface **19***a* as illustrated in FIG. **3** (printing target material P in FIG. **3** indicates a T-shirt, as an example) and the placement table **17**A on which the printing target material P has been placed is moved in the y direction. With this, the printing target material P can pass through a lower portion of an ink jet head **23** as a printing head.

Then, an operation panel **6** for performing various types of operations is arranged on an apparatus front surface of the ink jet printing apparatus **1** at a right side. An ink cartridge accommodating portion **8** in which an ink cartridge is accommodated is provided on the front surface of the apparatus **1** at an opposite side (apparatus left side) to the operation panel **6** sandwiching the placement table **17**A therebetween.

Ink is supplied to the ink jet head **23** constituting a printing executing portion from the ink cartridge accommodated in the ink cartridge accommodating portion **8**. The ink jet head **23** is an ink jet head having a well-known configuration and has a plurality of nozzle rows (not illustrated) on which a plurality of nozzle holes (not illustrated) for discharging ink are arranged. Further, the ink jet head **23** is mounted on a carriage **22** which is driven to reciprocate in the x direction (in FIG. **2**, paper plane rear surface direction) intersecting with the transportation direction y.

The ink jet printing apparatus **1** has been described as an ink jet printing apparatus in which the ink jet head **23** is a serial-type head which discharges ink while moving in the x direction intersecting with the transportation direction y. However, the ink jet head **23** may be a line head. Further, it is needless to say that the line head may be provided in a fixed manner or provided to be movable in the transportation direction y.

The placement table **17**A is transported to a position (printing start position) indicated by a virtual line and a reference numeral **17**A'. Then, movement of the placement table **17**A to the apparatus front side (left side in FIG. **2**) and ink discharging from the ink jet head **23** are alternately performed so that printing is executed. If ink discharging onto the printing target material P has been finished, the placement table **17**A returns to a position (set position of the printing target material P) indicated by a solid line in FIG. **2** so that the printing target material P onto which ink has been discharged can be taken out.

First Embodiment

Subsequently, the placement table **17**A according to the first embodiment of the invention is described in detail. As illustrated in FIG. **1** and FIG. **4**, the placement table **17**A includes recesses **19***b* and **19***c* in which swelling portions (in FIG. **3**, M**1** and M**2**) of the printing target material P fall.

To be more specific, as illustrated in FIG. **3**, the T-shirt as an example of the printing target material P is formed such that a neck portion M**1** and a breast pocket portion M**2** (examples) are thick. Therefore, if the T-shirt is placed on a flat surface only, the neck portion M**1** and the breast pocket portion M**2** are made into a state of being swelled to the upper side with respect to a surface (upper surface of the printing target material P) at the printing side. This arises a risk that the neck portion M**1** and the breast pocket portion M**2** will rub with the ink jet head **23**.

Accordingly, the recess **19***c* having a shape corresponding to the neck portion M**1** is formed on the placement table **17**A at a position corresponding to the neck portion M**1** (FIG. **1**). Further, the recess **19***b* having a shape corresponding to the breast pocket portion M**2** is formed at a position corresponding to the breast pocket portion M**2** (FIG. **1**). It is to be noted that the recess **19***c* is formed to be a region (area) which is slightly larger than the neck portion M**1**. In a similar manner, the recess **19***b* is formed to be a region (area) which is slightly larger than the breast pocket portion M**2**.

In FIG. **4**, a dashed line L indicates a height of an upper surface (printing target surface) of the printing target material P. As illustrated in FIG. **4**, since the recess **19***c* is formed on the placement table **17**A, the neck portion M**1** as an example of a swelling portion falls in the recess **19***c*. With this, the height of the neck portion M**1** becomes the same height as other printing regions. Further, the breast pocket portion M**2** can fall in the recess **19***b* in the same manner. Accordingly, rubbing with the head does not occur and a distance between the ink jet head **23** and the printing target material P needs not be made larger in order to prevent the rubbing with the head from occurring, thereby obtaining a preferable printing result.

It is to be noted that the recesses **19***b* and **19***c* are formed on a plate **19** which can be exchanged. The plate **19** can be set to an upper surface **17***a* (see FIG. **6**A, too) of a main body of the placement table **17**A. In a state where the plate **19** is set, the upper surface of the placement table **17**A has the same height on the entire region other than the recesses **19***b* and **19***c*. Accordingly, when forms (positions, shapes, and sizes of the swelling portions) of the printing target material P are different, if the plates **19** corresponding to the forms are formed, the printing target material P of different forms can be easily available by exchanging to the plate **19** corresponding to the shape of the printing target material P.

Second Embodiment

Next, the second embodiment of the invention will be described. On the placement table **17**B included by the ink jet printing apparatus **1'** according to the second embodiment of the invention as illustrated in FIG. **5**, suction holes for sucking the printing target material P are provided in recesses in which swelling portions of the printing target material P fall.

To be more specific, a hollow portion **17***b* is formed at the inner side of the placement table **17**B as illustrated in FIG. **5**. Further, a suction fan device **25** as a sucking unit arranged on the base **15** and the hollow portion **17***b* are connected to each other with a tube **26**. A number of suction holes **18** (FIG. **6**A) communicating with the hollow portion **17***b* are formed on the upper surface **17***a* of a main body of the placement table **17**B. If the suction fan device **25** is operated, the printing target material P can be sucked through the suction holes **18**. It is to be noted that strength of suction by the suction fan device **25** can be adjusted under control by a controller **3**.

If the plate **19** is placed on the placement table **17**B configured in the above manner, the suction holes **18** appear only on bottom portions of the recesses **19***b* and **19***c* as illustrated in FIG. **6**B. Accordingly, if the printing target material P is placed on the above placement table **17**B and the neck portion M**1** and the breast pocket portion M**2** as the swelling portions are made to fall in the recesses **19***c* and

19*b*, respectively, each swelling portion can be made to fall in each recess reliably. In particular, even when rigidity of the printing target material P is high, the swelling portions of the printing target material P can be made to fall in the recesses more reliably.

Further, the strength of the suction through the suction holes **18** can be adjusted. Therefore, the falling degree of a swelling portion of the printing target material P in the recess can be adjusted. For example, if the degree of the suction of the printing target material P having relatively high rigidity is set to be relatively stronger than that of the printing target material P having low rigidity, the neck portion M**1** and the breast pocket portion M**2** can be made to fall in the recesses **19***c* and **19***b*, respectively, reliably.

Further, since the strength of the suction through the suction holes **18** can be adjusted, when the swelling portions fall in the recesses more than necessary as illustrated in FIG. **7**A, for example, and a desired printing result is not obtained, the following processing can be available. That is, the strength of the suction is adjusted so that height of the upper surface of the swelling portion can be made appropriate (can be adjusted to be uniform with that of the peripheral portion), as illustrated in FIG. **7**B.

In addition, when ink is discharged onto the swelling portions of the printing target material P, it is preferable that the degree of the suction through the suction holes **18** be relatively weak in comparison with cases other than this ink discharging. That is to say, there is a risk that the suction through the suction holes **18** gives an adverse influence on ink landing accuracy. Therefore, the following processing can be available when ink is also discharged onto the swelling portion of the printing target material P. That is, if the suction is made relatively weak when ink is discharged onto the swelling portion, a preferable printing result of the swelling portion can be obtained.

A first characteristic of the second embodiment as described above is a point that the suction holes **18** are provided at the inner side of the recesses. A second characteristic thereof is a point that the strength of the suction through the suction holes **18** can be adjusted. A third characteristic thereof is a point that the strength of the suction is adjusted in accordance with rigidity of the printing target material P. A fourth characteristic thereof is a point that the suction through the suction holes **18** is made weak when ink is discharged onto the swelling portion of the printing target material P. However, all of the first to fourth characteristics need not be included and it is needless to say that only one of them may be included or any combinations thereof may be included alternatively.

Third Embodiment

Next, the third embodiment of the invention will be described. The placement table **17**C according to the third embodiment of the invention as illustrated in FIG. **8** is configured such that a depth of the recess **19***c* (or recess **19***b*) can be adjusted. Reference numerals **20**A, **20**B, and **20**C indicate spacers having different thicknesses. The spacers **20**A, **20**B, and **20**C are put in the recess **19***c* (or the recess **19***b*) so that the depth thereof can be made appropriate in accordance with a swelling degree of a swelling portion of the printing target material P.

Through-holes **20***a* are formed in the spacers indicated by the reference numerals **20**B and **20**C. On the other hand, no through-hole **20***a* is formed in the spacer indicated by the reference numeral **20**A. In this manner, if the through-hole **20***a* is selected to be provided or not to be provided, it can be easily selected for the printing target material P to be sucked or not to be sucked through the suction holes **18**. If the printing target material P is sucked, strength of the suction can be adjusted. With the above configuration, the degree of freedom of the suction can be improved.

It is to be noted that the above method of adjusting the depth of the recess is merely an example and it is needless to say that the method is not limited thereto.

Another Configuration of Adjusting Depth of Recess

FIG. **10** illustrates another example of the configuration of adjusting the depth of the recess **19***c* (or recess **19***b*).

In this example, a portion of the placement table **17**C, which corresponds to the recess **19***c* (or recess **19***b*), is configured to be movable in a suction direction. That is to say, the movable portion **17**C' is movable in an up-down direction with respect to fixing portions **17**C" of the placement table **17**C and can be fixed by fixing tools **28** at an appropriate movement position. The structure of the fixing tools **28** is not limited to the L-shaped fixing tool as illustrated in FIG. **10** which can be detached and well-known fixing tools can be used.

Further, in this example, on the fixing portions **17**C" of the placement table **17**C, guiding portions **27** which guide movement of the movable portion **17**C' are formed to be thicker than other portions. With this, guiding ranges of the guiding portions **27** are long so that movement of the movable portion **17**C' is made stable.

The depth of the recess **19***c* (or recess **19***b*) can be made appropriate in accordance with the swelling degree of the swelling portion of the printing target material P with the configuration of the movable portion **17**C'.

Fourth Embodiment

Next, the fourth embodiment of the invention will be described. On the placement table **17**D according to the fourth embodiment of the invention as illustrated in FIG. **9**, a holding members **21** which hold the printing target material P are provided on the periphery of the recess **19***c* (or recess **19***b*). In the embodiment, the holding member **21** is formed by a member (for example, rubber, cork, sponge or the like) realizing a high friction coefficient against the printing target material P. This makes it possible to prevent the swelling portion of the printing target material P from floating or lower the degree of the floating with the friction coefficient higher than that of a circumferential surface of the holding member **21** after the swelling portion has been made to fall in the recess **19***c* (or recess **19***b*).

When the holding member **21** is provided, it is preferable that the holding member **21** be provided so as not to form irregularities on the upper surface (placement surface) of the placement table **17**D. For example, it is preferable that a recess be formed and then the holding member **21** be provided on the recess.

Fifth Embodiment

Next, the fifth embodiment of the invention is described with reference to FIGS. **11**A and **11**B. As illustrated in FIG. **11**A, a printing target material P as a printing target in the embodiment is formed such that the neck portion M**1** and sleeve stitching portions M**3** instead of the pocket (FIG. **3**) are thick. That is to say, the neck portion M**1** and the sleeve stitching portions M**3** correspond to swelling portions. A

T-shirt (P) is formed such that the neck portion M1 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 are thick. Therefore, if the T-shirt is placed on a flat surface only, the neck portion M1 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 are made to swell to the upper side with respect to a surface (upper surface of the printing target material P) of the printing side. This arises a risk that the neck portion M1 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 rub with the ink jet head **23**.

Then, as illustrated in FIG. **11**B, the recess **19***c* having the shape corresponding to the neck portion M1 is formed on the placement table **17**E of the embodiment at the position corresponding to the neck portion M1. In addition, recesses **19***d* having shapes corresponding to the sleeve stitching portions M3 are formed at positions corresponding to the sleeve stitching portions M3.

It is to be noted that the recess **19***c* and the recesses **19***d* are formed to be regions (areas) which are slightly larger than the neck portion M1 and the sleeve stitching portions M3, respectively.

In the embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. **11**B, the recesses **19***c* and **19***d* are formed on the placement table **17**E. Therefore, the neck portion M1 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 as the swelling portions fall in the recesses **19***c* and **19***d*, respectively. This makes it possible to set heights of the neck portion M1 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 to be substantially the same height as other printing regions. Accordingly, in the embodiment, a risk of rubbing with the head can be reduced. In addition, a distance between the ink jet head **23** and the printing target material P needs not be made larger in order to prevent the rubbing with the head from occurring, thereby obtaining a preferable printing result.

Sixth Embodiment

Next, the sixth embodiment of the invention is described with reference to FIGS. **12**A and **12**B. As illustrated in FIG. **12**A, a printing target material P as a printing target of the embodiment is formed such that a neck collar portion M4, a button portion M5 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 are thick. That is to say, the neck collar portion M4, the button portion M5 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 correspond to swelling portions. The T-shirt (P) is formed such that the neck collar portion M4, the button portion M5 and the sleeve stitching portion M3 are thick. Therefore, if the T-shirt is placed on a flat surface only, the neck collar portion M4, the button portion M5 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 are made to swell to the upper side with respect to a surface (upper surface of the printing target material P) of the printing side. This arises a risk that the neck collar portion M4, the button portion M5 and the sleeve stitching portions M3 will rub with the ink jet head **23**.

Then, as illustrated in FIG. **12**B, a recess **19***e* having a shape corresponding to the neck collar portion M4 is formed on the placement table **17**F of the embodiment at a position corresponding to the neck collar portion M4. Further, a recess **19***f* having a shape corresponding to the button portion M5 is formed at a position corresponding to the button portion M5. In addition, the recesses **19***d* having the shapes corresponding to the sleeve stitching portions M3 are formed at the positions corresponding to the sleeve stitching portions M3.

It is to be noted that the recesses **19***d*, **19***e*, and **19***f* are formed to be regions (areas) which are slightly larger than the sleeve stitching portions M3, the neck collar portion M4, and the button portion M5, respectively.

In the embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. **12**B, the recesses **19***d*, **19***e*, and **19***f* are formed on the placement table **17**F. Therefore, the sleeve stitching portions M3, the neck collar portion M4, and the button portion M5 as the swelling portions fall in the recesses **19***d*, **19***e*, and **19***f*, respectively. This makes it possible to set heights of the sleeve stitching portions M3, the neck collar portion M4, and the button portion M5 to be substantially the same height as other printing regions. Accordingly, in the embodiment, a risk of rubbing with the head can be reduced. In addition, a distance between the ink jet head **23** and the printing target material P needs not be made larger in order to prevent the rubbing with the head from occurring, thereby obtaining a preferable printing result.

Each of the above-described embodiments is merely an example and it is needless to say that the invention is not limited to the embodiments. Further, the invention is applied to the ink jet printing apparatus which discharges ink onto a printing target material such as a woven fabric. However, the invention can be also applied to an ink jet recording apparatus which performs recording on a recording target medium such as recording paper.

In addition, in each of the above-described embodiments, a configuration in which the placement tables **17**A to **17**F move in the y direction and the ink jet head **23** does not move in the y direction has been described. However, the invention is not limited thereto and it is sufficient that a configuration in which the relationship of the relative movement of them is satisfied is employed. Accordingly, a configuration in which the ink jet head **23** and the apparatus main body **2** are integrated with each other and move in the y direction, and the placement tables **17**A to **17**F do not move in the y direction may be employed instead of the above-described configuration. Alternatively, a configuration in which both of the placement tables **17**A to **17**F and the ink jet head **23** move in the y direction may be employed.

What is claimed is:

1. An ink jet printing apparatus comprising:
- a placement table that is capable of placing a printing target; and
- a printing head that discharges ink to the printing target on the placement table;
- wherein
  - the placement table includes a main body and a plate that is set within a hollow portion of the main body, with ends of the main body and the plate being aligned, and
  - the main body supports a first part of the printing target, and the plate supports a second part of the printing target.

2. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the plate includes a recess in which a swelling portion of the printing target fall.

3. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim **2**, wherein
- the plate is capable of exchanging a first plate for a second plate, and
- a position of the recess of the first plate is different from a position of the recess of the second plate.

4. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim **2**, wherein
- the plate is capable of exchanging a first plate for a second plate, and
- a shape of the recess of the first plate is different from a shape of the recess of the second plate.

5. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein

the plate is capable of exchanging a first plate for a second plate, and

a size of the recess of the first plate is different from a size of the recess of the second plate.

6. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein

suction holes that are capable of sucking the printing target, are formed on the main body, and

when the plate is set to the main body, a part of the suction holes are exposed from the recess.

7. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when the plate is set to the main body, a part of the suction holes are covered by the plate.

8. The ink jet printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the plate is attached to the main body so as to be detachable from the main body.

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